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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Syria

DATE: 25X1A6a

SUBJECT Strike of Government Employees

INFO. [REDACTED]

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SUPPLEMENT [REDACTED]

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1. A nation-wide strike of several days duration took place among government employees in Syria, beginning on 17 May. The employees of the Ministry of Public Education constituted the most militant element among the strikers. Within this group the primary and secondary school teachers, who had most to gain in the application of a new table of organization (cadre), assumed the leadership and tenaciously enforced the almost-total strike, keeping it alive by refusing to accept Parliament's hasty measures of appeasement. They even stoned the Post Office when its employees failed to leave work.
2. The primary and secondary teachers are organized in a strong, aggressive, communist-dominated union headed by Khalid Qatwash, a cousin of Khalid Baghdash, the President of the Syrian Communist Party. Qatwash was the real organizer and leader of the strike, according to report. With his close-knit union he dominated the general strike meetings; he personally kept in line the lukewarm central strike committee; he directed all aspects of the actual operations by means of flying squads of volunteers and by emissaries sent out from Damascus to all the chief centers of Syria. It is believed that he was provided with funds from the Communist Party treasury.
3. Anti-Government separatists in the Jebel Druze opportunistically seized upon the strike as a method of stimulating further discontent with the present regime. By secretly encouraging the strikers in their demands, while overtly practicing a laissez-faire policy, they succeeded in prolonging the strike for several days. During the course of the strike they stated that government employees in the Jebel Druze had failed to receive their table of organization (cadre) [evidently means a salary increase] as a direct result of the government's hostility and contempt for the Druzes.
4. The separatists evidently extended the strike in an attempt to force the Government to grant their extreme demands for the settlement of the Sheikh Marwan incident [see [REDACTED]]. These demands include insistence on the dismissal of certain high-ranking gendarmier officers in the Hauran.

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